



AAC Publications

Rupshu Region: Thongmeth Kangri, Northeast Ridge

India, Ladakh

Seen from the north, Thongmeth Kangri on the Spiti-Rupshu divide. Photo: Rajesh Gadgil

In a highly exploratory expedition to the Spiti-Rupshu divide, southwest of the well-known Tso Moriri (lake), a small group of Indian mountaineers made the first ascent of an unnamed 6,000m peak and explored the Monto Group in August and September 2023.

Rajesh Gadgil, Dilip Lagu, Rajendra Shinde, and support staff reached the end of a rough road, southwest of Tso Moriri, on August 14. They then trekked to a base camp at 4,985m (32°42'39"N, 78°05'50"E), established on the 19th. This is very arid terrain, and water supply became the main concern when making camps. Unfortunately, Lagu became unwell and reluctantly decided to leave the expedition.

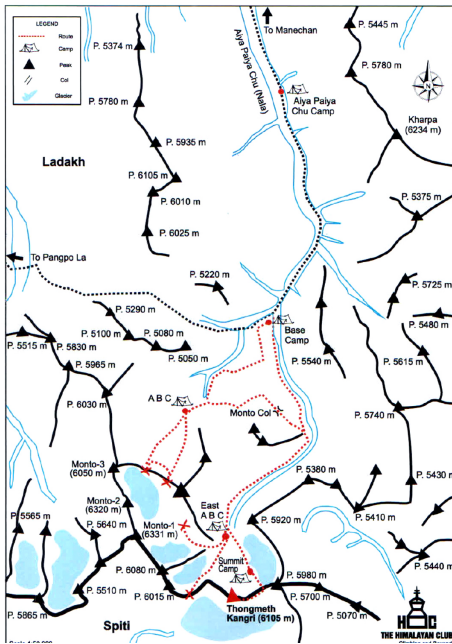
The Monto peaks—none of which had known ascents—lie on a ridge running north from the Spiti-Rupshu (Himachal Pradesh–Ladakh) divide, and approaches from both the north and east were explored. With the eastern approach appearing the most promising, the whole team shifted to a suitable advanced base. Further inspection showed the face they needed to ascend to reach the highest peak—Monto I (6,331m, 32°38'42.78"N, 78°2'48.57"E)—was a rocky wall that would require rope fixing, rather than the snow and ice face that they expected. However, on the watershed ridge south of their camp stood the unclimbed Peak 6,105m (32°37'28"N, 78°05'15"E), and this appeared far more accessible.

On August 30, they carried equipment southeast to a "summit camp" at 5,504m and the following night slept there. On September 1, Angchuk Bhutia, Pasang Bhutia, Sangbu Bhutia, Tshering Bhutia, Gadgil, and Shinde climbed icy slopes to the col (ca 5,750m) on the ridge east of the summit. They followed the snowy ridge southwest, easy at first then steeper toward the top, where they fixed some rope. All reached the summit at around 10:45 a.m.

By September 6, they were back at the roadhead, having brought everything out from the mountain. They named the peak Thongmeth Kangri.

—Lindsay Griffin, AAJ

Images



The area of arid mountains to the southwest of Tso Moriri and the 2023 expedition's reconnaissance trips, camps, and Thongmeth Kangri ascent route.



Seen from the north, Thongmeth Kangri on the Spiti-Rupshu divide.

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